

ISSUE AREAS

Neighborhood Commercial

Existing Commercial Areas

The majority of commercial development in Cluster 3 is in a strip commercial format - in other words, a relatively shallow strip of land about 100' deep extending along major street frontages. Existing zoning reinforces this pattern of commercial development and may not allow the flexibility in site size and configuration needed to be successful in attracting larger scale neighborhood commercial reinvestments.

The results of the neighborhood commercial building condition survey indicate that many strip commercial areas in Cluster 3 are showing signs of advanced decline or major deterioration. Notable exceptions, where building conditions indicate that economic viability is strong, include:

- Kercheval from East Grand Boulevard to Van Dyke;
- Jefferson (south side) from East Grand Boulevard to Alter;
- Jefferson (north side) from East Grand Boulevard to Burns;
- Mack from Alter to Moross; and
- Warren from Alter to Buckingham and from Woodhall to Moross.

(It is important to remember that the map illustrating the results of the neighborhood commercial building condition survey includes all non-residential frontages, not just retail/commercial frontages.)

Not all of the commercial strips in Cluster 3 will regain their vitality in the next 5 - 10 years. As a result, choices on commercial reinvestment priorities must be made in order to establish a framework for coordinating public, private and non-profits efforts. Nevertheless, the deteriorated appearance of vacant and poorly maintained buildings along high visibility street frontages creates an overwhelmingly negative image of the vitality of the Cluster and its potential as a reinvestment location. Therefore, directions must be established for the re-use of those strip commercial areas which are showing signs of moderate to severe decline and which will not become target areas for retail reinvestment.

Planned Neighborhood Commercial Developments

The major commercial developments planned and underway in Cluster 3 include:

- Riverbend Plaza Phase II expansion (\$2.2 million);
- Jefferson Veterinary Clinic; and
- Mack/Alter Square (\$5 million).

In addition, Cluster 3 stakeholders note that there have been a number of smaller commercial investments which in many cases are as meaningful to residents as the investments in the "major development " category.

Focus Group and IGI Highlights

Stakeholders identified the Cluster's large population and the concentration of higher income households in some areas as assets for commercial reinvestment. Historic architecture in some parts of the Cluster, and the riverfront, were also considered to be assets. Major barriers identified by stakeholders included poor city services; limited public transportation and the deteriorated appearance of commercial frontages on many major streets.

The Cluster neighborhood commercial uses that are most frequently patronized by stakeholders are banks, personal service establishments and business service uses. However, stakeholders indicated that they shopped for business services even more often outside the City of Detroit. Other retail goods and services purchased most frequently outside the City included clothing and households goods, entertainment and groceries.

With the exception of banking and personal services, stakeholders overwhelming found that the quality of goods and services offered within the Cluster were not up to their standards. As a result, much of the Cluster's buying power is being used outside the Cluster and the City of Detroit. The goods and services stakeholders identified as most essential to the quality of life included grocery stores, hardware stores and restaurants and entertainment.

The locations which stakeholders identified as having the greatest potential for retail reinvestment included:

- Conner/Warren intersection and along the east side of Conner north of Mack - medium/cluster scale commercial;
- Jefferson at Conner - small/neighborhood scale commercial;
- Jefferson at Chalmers - small/neighborhood scale commercial;
- Mack at Alter - small/neighborhood scale commercial;
- Warren at Outer Drive - small/neighborhood scale commercial;
- and
- Mack at Van Dyke - small/neighborhood scale commercial.

Stakeholders recognized that additional commercial reinvestment locations to the west of the Conner corridor should be identified. They also discussed whether the southwest corner of the Warren/Conner intersection might have even greater potential as non-retail job-related reinvestment area.

As these preliminary ideas on target areas for neighborhood commercial reinvestment are refined, it will be important to consider their relationship to the areas/census tracts with higher purchasing power; to areas of recent housing investments and identified housing reinvestment target areas and their relationship to existing areas of commercial strength.

Housing

Existing Housing Conditions

Most stakeholders believe that the condition of housing in Cluster 3 is fair to poor (rather than good or excellent) and most agree that conditions have gotten worst since they have lived in the Cluster.

The results of the housing condition survey identify areas where concentrations of severe housing deterioration and advanced stages of decline exist within Cluster 3. Because the survey was structured to include vacant lots as an indicator of overall block group housing condition, the results correspond closely to existing patterns of vacant land. These concentrations of vacant land represent a significant potential for new housing development, especially if a sufficient critical mass of new housing can be created to establish a sense of neighborhood and a strong relationship to areas of stable housing (or other stable anchors) can be established. Stakeholders recognized this vacant land as an asset in attracting new housing reinvestment.

The most deteriorated housing areas in Cluster 3 are located:

- immediately west of the Conner industrial corridor – from Conner to Alter between I-94 and Jefferson – with a few exceptions north of Canfield; and
- to the east of the Conner industrial corridor from St. Jean to Burns. In this area, however, deterioration is not as severe, nor is the pattern of deterioration as uniform as to the east.

Public Housing

Three public housing sites are located in Cluster 3:

- Parkside Homes, located on the northeast quadrant of the Warren/Conner intersection;
- Conner Waveney, located on the east side of Conner between Warren and Mack; and
- Sheridan Place, located on Jefferson Avenue east of East Grand Boulevard.

As noted below, major reinvestments in both Parkside Homes and Sheridan Place are planned or underway.

Major Developments

Major housing developments in Cluster 3 provide anchors or assets on which additional successful housing reinvestments can be built. Major housing developments planned and/or underway in the Cluster include:

- Planned \$3.2 million investment by the Messiah Housing Development Corporation in Islandview Village between Jefferson and Kercheval from East Grand Boulevard to Sheridan;
- Planned housing development and rehab by the Islandview Village Development Corporation; (Phases I and II to include 50 new homes);
- Detroit Housing Commission renovation of Sheridan Place;
- East Village/Jefferson Avenue neighborhood redevelopment including 380 infill housing units;
- West Village new housing construction and housing rehab;
- 20 new homes in Jos. Berry Park Estates, located south of Jefferson and west of Cadillac;

- Grainmark development of 350 single family homes located south of Jefferson and west of St. Jean;
- 41 units at Clairpointe Homes located east of Conner and south of Jefferson;
- A \$15 million investment in Victoria Park located south of Jefferson and west of Chalmers;
- Greyhaven Estate's Shorepointe Village including 52 homes on the riverfront west of Chalmers;
- Infill and rehab of 50 homes in two phases in the area south of Averhill between Lakewood and Alter;
- MHT Housing Inc. Eastside Emergency Center housing for homeless women and children, located west of Chalmers and south of Kercheval;
- Detroit Housing Commission replacement of Parkside Homes located north of Warren and east of Conner; and
- Morningside Commons new construction and rehab in the area north of Mack and east of Alter Road to include 40 homes in Phase I.

The City of Detroit is also investigating strategies for encouraging housing redevelopment in the 1300-acre area bounded by Warren, Jefferson, Conner and Alter, where City ownership of parcels in most census tract block groups ranges from 40-55%.

Focus Group and IGI Highlights

In addition to concentrations of vacant land, Cluster 3 stakeholders cited high housing demand and recent infrastructure improvements as major assets to housing reinvestment. Stakeholders identified city land banking and lack of enforcement of city ordinances as the greatest barriers to new housing development.

Stakeholders expressed a preference for keeping at least 50% of the Cluster's housing stock as for sale/owner occupied. (About 48% was owner occupied in 1990.) Stakeholders supported a price mix for new housing that emphasized housing affordable to low and moderate income families. The preferred overall price mix for the Cluster was:

- 50% or more affordable to low and moderate income households (\$60,000- 89,000 sale price);
- About 25% priced for upper income households (over \$150,000) if market support is adequate; and
- The balance priced for middle income households ((\$90,000 - 150,000).

Stakeholders identified potential housing reinvestment locations for new large scale housing redevelopment and for rehab and infill.

New, Large scale Housing Development

- Between Warren and Mack from Algonquin east to Lakepointe
- Between Jefferson and Mack from Algonquin to Alter
- South of Jefferson and north of Freud from St. Jean to Marquette (the Grainmark area)
- Islandview Village area

Rehab and Infill

- Between Warren and Jefferson from Conner to Algonquin
- Between Jefferson and Mack from Algonquin to Alter
- Between Mack and Warren from Lakepointe to Devonshire (Morningside Commons area)
- South of Jefferson from Lakewood east to the City limits
- East Village area
- Islandview Village/West Village area
- Fellowship Non-Profit Housing area between Warren and Mack, Cadillac and Van Dyke

Stakeholders also suggested that multifamily housing could be an appropriate use on those portions of commercial strips which will not be target areas for housing reinvestment.

Job Centers

Existing Job Statistics

In 1994, it was estimated that there were about 28,870 jobs in Cluster 3 which represented about 9% of the total jobs (313,082) in the City. The majority of Cluster 3's jobs (57%) were in the services sector, while 20% were in manufacturing and 11% were in retail trade. Wholesale trade and public administration each accounted for about 4% of the Cluster's jobs. Finance, insurance and real estate; transportation, communication and utilities; and agriculture each represented less than 1%.

Major Developments

Significant job-related development projects planned or underway in Cluster 3 include:

- Chrysler Corporation assembly plant expansion located in the Conner corridor north of Jefferson

- Chrysler Corporation engine plant in the Conner corridor north of Mack;
- Budd Company renovation and exterior improvements in the Conner corridor;
- Detroit Health Connection facility on Jefferson west of Chalmers; and
- St. John Hospital birthing center and floor additions, west parking deck expansion and Linville Street redevelopment at Moross and Mack.

Focus Group and IGI Highlights

Stakeholders identified the following as the types of jobs Cluster 3 needs more of:

1. Service
2. Retail
3. Entertainment/tourism
4. Wholesale distribution

Stakeholders felt that the Cluster's greatest assets related to job-oriented reinvestment were the waterfront and amount of vacant land available for development. They identified the greatest barriers as poor public transportation and the poor condition of major streets. Stakeholders suggested improved schools, more reliable transportation and land assembly to make sites available as the best incentives for attracting job-related reinvestments.

Potential sites/areas for non-retail/commercial job-related reinvestment include:

- the area between I-94 and East Grand Boulevard in the northwestern corner of the Cluster;
- the Mt. Elliott/Belleuve industrial corridor, especially north of Lafayette; and
- the southwest quadrant of Warren/Conner intersection.

Stakeholders identified job training for adults and youth as a major priority in Cluster 3. Initiatives to increase resident awareness and use of existing programs and resources (for example, Wayne County Community College, Golightly Voc Tech Center, and programs like Operation Get Down) were suggested, as well as the idea of developing partnerships between educational institutions, employers

and job training organizations. Stakeholders in Cluster 3 also believed that fostering entrepreneurship and small businesses development should be a key strategy for increasing job-related investment and expanding employment opportunities – with particular emphasis on African-American owned and operated businesses.

Transportation

Major Streets

I-94 and I-75 give Cluster 3 good regional accessibility, a particular asset for job-related reinvestment. Major north-south streets include Mt. Elliott, East Grand Boulevard, Van Dyke, Conner, Chalmers, Alter, Cadieux and Moross. Major east-west streets include Jefferson, Mack and Warren. Gratiot crosses the northwestern corner of the Cluster.

Transportation Investments

The following major transportation improvement projects are planned in Cluster 3.

- Resurfacing of Conner between Warren and Mack
- Bridge replacements on Alter Road near the riverfront

In addition, major improvements are being planned for I-94, including the improvement of service drives and interchange modifications. These improvements could help to reduce truck traffic in residential areas in the longer term.

A number of road repaving projects are also planned in Cluster 3.

Access to Automobiles

According to the 1990 Census, about 39% of Cluster 3 households do not have regular access to a car (as compared to 33% for the City overall). Given these statistics, it can be assumed that a significant number of people in Cluster 3 rely on public transit – even though the stakeholders who participated in the focus group were not frequent public transit users.

Transit

Buses operate on the following north-south streets in Cluster 3: Mt. Elliott, East Grand Boulevard, Van Dyke, Cadillac, St. Jean, Conner, Chalmers, Cadieux and Moross. East-west bus routes operate on Warren, Forest (east of Cadillac), Mack, Charlevoix and Vernor (east

of St. Jean and between Conner and Alter Road), Kercheval (east of Cadillac) and Lafayette (east of Van Dyke). A bus loop also serves the area south of Jefferson Avenue and east of Conner. Transfer stops linking to SMART lines are located on Warren at East Grand Boulevard and Gratiot.

Focus Group and IGI Highlights

Although about as many stakeholders ranked the condition of their neighborhood streets “good” as ranked them “bad”, almost all stakeholders ranked the condition of roads in the Cluster overall as bad. Truck traffic causing conflicts on residential streets was also considered to be an important issue. Decisions will be needed concerning the types of roadway improvements which should be given priority in the Cluster – from repaving, to the reconstruction of selected roadways and expressway interchanges to support high volumes of truck traffic, to streetscape and traffic calming improvements. Stakeholders also cited the cost and availability of auto insurance as an important issue.

Cluster 3 stakeholders considered the following to be important transportation-related investments.

- Prioritize street repaving based on need; coordinate repaving with other reinvestments.
- Re-time street lights.
- Enforce traffic regulations.
- Improve public transit.

Environment

Parks and Recreation

Cluster 3 stakeholders generally felt that existing parks were poorly maintained. They particularly suggested that the Manz Playfield (at Mack and Conner) be improved as a lighted Class A ballfield for league use. However, they also felt that the availability of vacant land to create additional green spaces was the Cluster’s most significant environmental asset. Reinvestment recommendations will need to be tailored to take advantage of the opportunity to create new parks and open spaces, while ensuring that they will be appropriately used and maintained. Another question of particular importance in Cluster 3 is the policy approach to the future use of existing City-owned riverfront parks. Stakeholders also suggested a tree planting program to replace trees damaged by the July 1997 storm.

Environmental Issues

A number of contaminated sites have been identified in Cluster 3.

CERCLA Superfund Sites

- Stranaglia Property on Warren east of Mt. Elliott
- A site on St. Jean north of Shoemaker
- A site between St. Jean and Conner north of Jefferson
- Two sites south of Jefferson between St. Jean and Conner

Act 307 sites

- Palmer Street a RR (6513 Palmer)
- Daelte Services on Mt. Elliott north of Jefferson
- The Old Mack Stamping Plant on Mack east of St. Jean

Stakeholders identified the combined sewer overflow into Fox Creek as an environmental problem. Cluster 3 stakeholders felt that the cumulative impact of overgrown vacant lots, illegal dumping, and abandoned cars also had a significant impact on the Cluster's quality of life. A high incidence of lead poisoning was also noted in the area bounded by Warren, Mack, Conner and Chalmers.

Youth Development Focus Group and IGI Highlights

Cluster 3 stakeholders seem to have relatively good information about available youth development programs for recreation, life and job skills training and mentoring/drop-out prevention. The most frequently mentioned agencies/organizations included Joy of Jesus, Job Corps, Inner City Sub Center, Operation Get Down, Wayne County Community College, Warren Conner Development Coalition and Golightly Voc Tech Center. Although stakeholders rated the effectiveness of these programs fairly high, there was a strong indication that stakeholders felt that existing programs did not meet their needs and that expanded services were necessary.

For many stakeholders, the key problem in youth development programming was a lack of funding availability – for better schools, more and better job training programs targeted to young people and better recreation programs and facilities.

Education and job training – from general life skills to technical programs – was a top priority for Cluster 3 stakeholders. More and better partnerships between educational institutions and/or job

training organizations and major employers in the Cluster (and the Detroit area) were suggested to ensure that all Cluster residents – but especially young people – have access to training programs.

Stakeholders also seemed to agree that while Cluster 3 has many recreation sites, those facilities were not as accessible as they should be to yield full benefits and that the quality of facilities and recreational staff needed improvement.